

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DOHA 01123 301053Z

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ACTION SCSE-00

INFO OCT-01 H-02 ISO-00 SSO-00 NEA-10 /013 W

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FM AMEMBASSY DOHA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1930

UNCLAS DOHA 1123

FOR OPERATIONS CENTER

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CGEN

SUBJ: REQUEST FOR ABSENTEE VOTING ASSISTANCE

1. IN ACCORDANCE WITH DEPT'S POLICY OF ENCOURAGING FOREIGN SERVICE PERSONNEL ABROAD TO VOTE, PLEASE PASS THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE ON AN URGENT BASIS TO MY CONGRESSMAN, JOHN J. LAFALCE, 36TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK, HOME RESIDENCE TONAWANDA, NEW YORK.

2. BEGIN MESSAGE:

DEAR JOHN:

YOU MAY RECALL OUR CONVERSATION OF LAST JUNE DURING WHICH I EXPLAINED TO YOU THE DIFFICULTIES OF ABSENTEE VOTING FROM SUCH REMOTE POSTS AS MINE IN DOHA, QATAR. IT APPEARS THAT I AM ABOUT TO BE DISFRANCHISED FOR THE NOVEMBER 2 ELECTION, AND I'D LIKE YOUR HELP ON AN URGENT BASIS TO PREVENT THIS FROM HAPPENING. WE RECEIVED OUR ABSENTEE BALLOTS JUST THIS MORNING, OCT 30. WE IMMEDIATELY COMPLETED AND MAILED THEM, BUT UNDER TIME LIMITS IMPOSED BY THE BOARD OF ELECTIONS IN ORLEANS COUNTY, I.E. REQUIRED RECEIPT OF BALLOTS BY NINE P.M. ON NOVEMBER 2, OUR BALLOTS WILL NEVER MAKE IT SINCE IT TAKES FIVE TO SEVEN DAYS TO GET A LETTER FROM HERE TO THE STATES. I UNDERSTAND THAT THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF NEW YORK ABSENTEE VOTERS WHO ARE IN A SIMILAR PREDICAMENT BECAUSE LEGAL WRANGLES DELAYED MAILING OF BALLOTS UNTIL VERY LATE IN OCTOBER, MAKING IT ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE BALLOTS TO BE RETURNED IN TIME TO BE COUNTED. THIS IS

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HARDLY THE FAULT OF ABSENTEE VOTERS, AND YET WE ARE IN PROSPECT

OF BEING DISFRANCHISED BY A DELAY BEYOND OUR CONTROL. IS THERE
NOT SOME ADMINISTRATIVE WAY OF EXTENDING THE DEADLINE FOR UP TO
A WEEK SO THAT OUR AND OTHER TARDY BALLOTS CAN BE COUNTED?
I ASK THAT YOU APPROACH THE APPROPRIATE STATE AUTHORITIES TO
SEE WHAT CAN BE DONE. I KNOW IT IS TRUE IN MY OWN CASE, AND
BELIEVE IT APPLIES TO OTHER OVERSEAS AMERICANS AS WELL, THAT
WE ARE KEENER TO HAVE OUR VOICE HEARD IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS
THAN MANY HOME FOLKS. I AM COUNTING ON YOU TO HELP US HAVE OUR
SAY ON NOVEMBER 2. BEST REGARDS. SIGNED: ROBERT P. PAGANELLI,
UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR TO THE STATE OF QATAR. END OF MESSAGE.
PAGANELLI

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